

*And as they draw nearer
 and the old storyteller intones a song,
 shyly they touch, then form a circle,
 and their tears
 fall on their hearts of stone
 and melt them
 into a ballad of understanding.*

*And the woman puts her arms around the man
 for they long for each other so.
 And they cradle a bruised child.
 And together
 they walk upon the parched earth
 and say:*

*"Green will be the colour of our love."
 And they turn to the man the colour of ivory
 and say: "You are our brother."
 And they embrace a woman the colour of ebony
 and say: "You are our sister."
 And they hold out their hands
 to the men and women and children
 the colour of copper, and promise:
 "Together we will build."*

*And though
 each speaks a different language,
 yet their tongues are not confounded,
 for like music is every sound.*

*And though
 each prays in a different direction,
 they part in peace, praising:
 "How good and spacious is our home."*

*And the sun will come out sweet and golden,
 and the moon velvet against the sky,
 and a poem will bloom
 in the middle of the desert
 and the soul of the world will be*

A BALLAD OF PEACE.

Donia Blumenfeld Clemen

A BALLAD OF PEACE

*Once upon a distant time,
God created man in his own image;
Male and Female created He them.*

*And they were beautiful to behold,
with stirrings of love, curiosity,
and imagination their portion.
And He gave them dignity of choice,
and set before them the gift of life.*

*And man invented machines of war
and he parcelled and merchandised the earth,
till dressed in dusty gray
it grew lean with starvation.
And bloated, he feasted
upon his brothers and sisters,
boasting: "Am I my brother's keeper?"
And all the men gathered in great halls
and quarreled and quarreled endlessly.*

*And Cain was followed by Sennacherib;
and Sennacherib was followed by Caligula;
and Caligula was followed by Attila;
and Attila was followed by Torquemada;
and Torquemada was followed by Hitler;
and Hitler was followed by Stalin
and Amin and Pol Pot and Saddam.
And they follow and multiply and follow
till they cover the whole earth.*

*And a crying is heard in the world
as some die in battle
and many of famine and broken dreams.
And the bereft of hope wander
among the ruins of their homes
and gaze
at the ravaged faces of men and women,
and hear children lost and weeping,
and recognize a sorrow that is their own.*